THE PROTESTATION

Given in by the

DISSENTING BRETHREN,

TO THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

July 21. 1652.

Reviewed and Refuted;

Briefly shewing the insufficiencie of the reasons thereof; And consequently the justice of the Assemblies sentence condemning it.

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Done by a Member of the

GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

Psal. 120. v. 7.

I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war.

Printed at Leith *by* Evan Tyler, 1652.

THE

PROTESTATION

OF

A MEMBER

ELECTED

TO THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF

Revived and Refused.

Done by a Member of the

GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

THE PROTESTATION

Reviewed and refuted;

Briefly ſhewing the inſufficiencie of the reaſons thereof; and conſequently, the juſtice of the Aſſemblies ſentence condemning it.

AMongſt the many ſad judgements, wherewith the holy bleſſed GOD is pleaſed to exerciſe this ſinfull Land, ſtaining the pride of all our glory; there is none more terrible, then that he threatneth to remove our Candleſtick, take his Kingdom from us, and ſet out his Vineyard to other Husband-men. And in this evill, that which extremely imbittereth it, is, that in the day of Sions calamitie, as there is none to comfort her, ſo when ſhe calleth for her Lovers, they deceive her, her very ſons ſtand a-far off from her; and as if that were not enough, they perſecute her whom the Lord hath ſmitten, and talk to the grief of thoſe whom he hath wounded; like *Jobs* friends, miſerable comforters; in her adverſity they gather themſelves together, in the place of Cordials, bringing Corroſives.

I ſhall be loath to trace that too-too ordinary by-path, of judging any mans everlaſting eſtate, by his temporall out-breakings, or his heart and intentions, by the out-ſide of his actions; yet (I think) I may ſafely ſay, that that Aſſembly at S. *Andrews* and *Dundee*, although deſpiſed of men, was owned of GOD; and that he guided their Pens, as all along in their Procedure, ſo particularly in their Warning and Declaration, and thoſe words thereof, *What ever hath been the intention of thoſe who have*

been inſtrumentall, in making this rent from publick Counſels and actings, yet the Work it ſelf, and the ſpirit that hath been ſtirring in it, hath been, and yet is moſt effectual for carrying on of the Deſign of the Adverſaries of our Cauſe. Which they prove by ſeven ſteps of their progreſſe, whereof that is the laſt and higheſt, their unparalelled practice (except that of the perfidious Prelats) of abſolutely declining the Authority of the Generall Aſſembly, and Proteſting againſt it as null; and ſo at one ſtroak, throwing down the hedge of Diſcipline in this Kirk, and making way for every beaſt of the Forreſt to break in, and that upon ſuch frivolous and falſe grounds, as maketh the authority of all the Aſſemblies of this Kirk, ſince the begun Reformation, to be called into queſtion, upon the ſame or the like pretences. This courſe, although they laboured to juſtifie, by whatſoever ſpecious pretexts the patrons of a bad cauſe could canvaſſe, yet the unwarrantableneſs of that way, and the vanity of the grounds thereof, hath been evidently evinced in that modeſt, ſolid and judicious Piece, inticuled, *A Vindication of the late Generall Aſſembly, &c.* Which I cannot but recommend to the ſerious peruſall of all the Members of this Kirk, who deſire ſatisfaction in the points of the preſent Differences, or to be armed againſt the like Procedures for the future; And that ſo much the rather, as that ye may ſee the ſame ſtorm again toſſing the almoſt drowned, and not yet recovered Ship of this Church. Whatſoever men are doing, the Devill is ſtill driving on the deſign he hath found ſo advantageous; dividing, that he may conquer, and that he may divide, cleaving us with a wedge of our own timber, and adding to his violence, deſpight; doing it at ſuch a time, in ſuch a place, and ſuch a way; I mean, by men who were eminent in our Aſſemblies, in the City of our ſolemnities, yea in the face of the Generall Aſſembly, and putting it to the Preſſe, even while they were treating with them for peace, and ſtudying in the bowels of Chriſtian condeſcendance, to reclaim them from ſo diviſive and deſtructive a courſe.

This way, as it cannot but ſadly affect every ſon of Sion, ſo hath it forced me, untill an abler Pen ſhall finde more leiſure, for preventing further inconvenience, to write theſe few things following, that the ſimple may be undeceived.

And

And paſſing for the preſent, the Repreſentation (as they call it) but indeed the miſrepreſentation of our ſtate and differences; a bitter Piece, filled with uncharitable aſperſions, moſtly repeated again in the Proteſtation. Waving alſo the Propoſitions offered therewith to the Aſſembly, and ſo ſatisfactorily anſwered by it, I ſhall (Godwilling) grapple with them in their Arſenall of the Proteſtation it ſelf, yet ſhortly glancing onely at ſome principall things.

Where I begin with the Title, A PROTESTATION, which was given in againſt the Supreme Repreſentative of this Kirk, although I do not deny, but that Generall Aſſemblies may erre, and the godly be ſo put to it, as to have no remedy left them in Law, but to proteſt; yet except the caſe be clear and ſure, this courſe is one of the higheſt contempts of Eccleſiaſtick authority. The laſt refuge for removing of ſcandals being *Matt.* 18. 17. *tell the Church*, after which nothing remaineth, but if he neglect to hear the Church, *let him be as a heathen or a publican.* I truſt, whatſoever gloſſes others put upon the words, there is no difference betwixt our Brethren and us, about the expoſition of them: And hence appeareth the equity of that Act and practice of our Aſſemblies, inflicting the higheſt cenſures upon ſuch; and reaſon, ſince they (in the higheſt meaſure) neglect to hear the Church, neither is there now any *ulterior* or *ſuperior* Judicatory to go to. It is the judgment of all moderat and modeſt Divines, that a great deal of reverence is due to the Church, even when ſhe erreth; But what if ſhe erre not? and whether ſhe do or not, wherein have theſe men ſhown their reverence and reſpect to their Mother? who what in them lyeth (but bleſſed be the Lord it lyeth not) would diſcover her nakedneſs, when others then Brethren are to behold it. Let them take heed if this be not a main ſtep to Separation, (which in words they ſeem to abhorre) when as they proteſt and profeſſe they will not hear us, ſo they would caſt on us a kind of neceſsity to hold them as Heathens and Publicans; But to prevent this, they have found a way of their own, and (as if they had not been of us) they are gone out from us, and ſetting up to do their own buſineſs without us, as they ſeem to intimate in the laſt page of their Printed Paper after the Proteſtation, contrary to the very fundamentals of the Diſcipline of our Kirk, which is, and hath ever

ever been profeſſed to be, by Presbyteries, Synods, and National Aſſemblies, duly ſubordinate one to another, all which their courſe overturneth, while they walk in another way to make the matters of their Propoſitions practicable, as they ſay.

But beſides that, a Proteſtation is at beſt (except in the caſe of pungent neceſſity) in its nature odious, it is ſo much worſe in our Kirk, where we are tyed by the ſtricteſt Bonds both of the National, and ſolemn League and Covenant, againſt all diviſive motions and courſes; and I pray, what is this other then a diviſive motion, and that of the deepeſt dye, for them to ſeparate themſelves, and joyning together make a Party, when the Supreme Judicatories of Kirk and State were going on in their continued Actings, in the day of great danger and diſtreſſe? They may be pleaſed to remember their own Actings and ſpeeches, when God honoured them to be ſitting in the Supreme Judicatories; How far ſhort came the intended diviſive Supplication in *Anno* 1648. of this courſe they are now on? Nay, the very groſſe Petition in *Anno* 1642. both which ſome of them (I ſay ſome, for moſt of them are but of yeſterday, and had then no place in our Judicatories) ſhewed ſo much zeal againſt.

And thus paſſing the Title of it, we come to the matter, where following their foot-ſteps, we begin with the Narrative which they begin, with aſſerting, *that it is well known to diverſe of our number, what peaceable endeavours they have uſed without ſucceſſe, in order to the removing of the differences among us.* To which I reply, that even by the permiſſion of their own phraſe, moſt part of the Aſſembly might, yea did not know any ſuch thing, but were confidently perſwaded, if any ſuch endeavours were uſed, the lack of ſucceſſe did and doth lye ſolely and ſadly upon the Proteſtors themſelves. When this was publickly debated in the Aſſembly, there was none found that knew ought in that kind, except that which was done in the latter end of the laſt year, which let the world judge, how peaceable an endeavour it was, and whence it came that it wanted ſucceſſe.

Thus it was: They meeting then in *Edinburgh* without Order; after a little pauſe, did conſtitute themſelves in an Eccleſiaſticall Judicatory, wherein Magiſterially they defined things ſo prejudiciall to us, as not onely perfectly obſtructed all Peace, but alſo

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ſounded the alarum to a new conflict, by emitting a Paper, wherein they peremptorily conclude among the chief cauſes of Gods controverſie with the Land, the publick Reſolutions and preceding Aſſembly to have a ſpeciall place. And having thus faſt locked the door of Peace, to mock the world, if it did nought elſe; They ſent ſome of their number to *St. Andrews*, to eſſay if they could draw off three or four there, and others to *Glaſgow* for the like intent, making accompt (which ſome of them ſpared not to proteſte) that if *they could get five or ſix of our moſt eminent men off, they cared not for the reſt of the Miniſtery*; profeſſing alſo at that Conference, and others of them in an open Synod that *they would never unite with the moſt part of the Miniſtery of Scotland.* And ſuteable to thoſe ends was their carriage at St. *Andrews*, as is clear in the Relation of the Paper thereanent, which Paper though publick enough, we have never yet heard contradicted by any.

As for any other of their endeavours, they are *inter occulta de quibus non judicat Eccleſia*: But I ſhall deſire it to be conſidered on the contrary, how the preceding Aſſembly at *Dundee* appointed, that Synods and Presbyteries ſhould deal with them, to give them ſatisfaction ere they proceeded to cenſure; the publick Commiſſion could do nothing of that kinde, being by the troubles of the time impeded to ſit, yet were not ſuch of them as could moſt conveniently correſpond, altogether defective in this, though preſſed with either part of a doleful *dilemma*; for if they ſhould act in the capacity of a Commiſſion, the Proteſters would not have conferred; and out of that capacity, their Acting (beſides that it could not have been obligatory to others) had been a ſilent quiteing, if not a betraying of their Truſt; But Providence offered opportunity thus: In the beginning of this year, ſome Brethren from ſeverall parts of the Country, being ſenſible of the then imminent ſnare and danger, reſolved by common conſent to come to *Edinburgh* about the 12. of *February*, at which time they heard there was to be a great meeting of our diſſenting Brethren, where they reſolved to deal with them, that there might be a common Warning emitted by conſent of all the Judicatories of the Kirk, concerning things which we doubted not were agreed to on all hands: accordingly they dealt with ſuch of them

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as were in Town, by the mediation of the Miniſters of *Edinburgh*, by whom they ſent to them materials of a Declaration, deſiring them to change or adde as they ſhould think fit for the purpoſe, but they refuſed to joyn, to the great grief of thoſe who did mediat, pretending they would firſt have a Conference about Difference, which was nothing elſe, but to diſappoint the matter, the danger being ſo near, that a Meeting for ſuch a Conference could not be conveened, and the danger prevented.

This paſt, the Synods in *April* being invited by that of Fife; by their acceptance of their Overture, ſhewed their Affections to ſeek a Peace with their Brethren, as might not trouble their Peace with God: And for that effect, did Commiſſionate ſome of their Members to come to *Edinburgh*, to a Meeting in *May* laſt: But that is the next thing they complain and challenge us of. Firſt for neglecting to give them timeous advertiſement, when yet the very firſt motion of that Meeting in all our Judicatories, was in their preſence, who if they had been of ſuch a peaceable temper as they talk of, would no doubt have made ſuch an invitation welcome, and embraced the occaſion. As for particular advertiſement to them ſeparatly, the Delegats of the Synod of *Fife* intruſted therewith, uſed all poſſible diligence, a fortnight before that meeting, diſpatching their miſſives (which for ought that is known) did not miſcarry, yea upon their diligence we found at that Meeting, ſome from *Roſſe*, and others from *Drumfreiſe*, places of very remote diſtance, both South and North: And it is credibly informed, that ſome of their chief leading men wrote both to *Aberdeen*, and *Galloway*, deſiring their Complices not to keep that Meeting. Secondly, they complain, *that not ſo much as ſome few dayes of delay could be obtained by thoſe few of their number which were then preſent, whereby they might give advertiſement to others.* The truth is, in reſpect of their paucity, they required at leaſt a fortnights delay (although they had probably a pre-indicted meeting reaſonable frequent, in that ſame place, the very week following, and others of them were in Town then, did appear to us, and ſome of them went out of Town immediatly before our Meeting) and ſo long a time could not be given, not only becauſe our Brethren having come haſtily from their ſeveral dwellings, were not able to attend ſo long, and once ſuffered to

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ſcatter could not conveniently be gathered again; but eſpecially becauſe having offered unto them a free Gen Aſſembly (the old acknowledged proper remedy of all Eccleſiaſtical diſeaſes) where many of our ſelves might again be preſent, it was plain that nothing to any good effect could be done till then: And Providence happily caſting that occaſion in their hands, that they might appoint and determine of the place of the enſuing Aſſembly, they could not ſuffer the ſame to ſlip, which could not be ſhunned, for lack of timeous advertiſement to the Presbyteries, if it were not then concluded. And ſo (which they perceived thoſe they ſpoke with directly aimed at) let the Kirk in this difficult time be ſhaken looſe of her Poſſeſſion, of that her dear bought Freedome, which Mr. *Welch*, Mr. *Forbes*, and other precious men, that now reſt, adventured their lives, and ſuffered baniſhment to preſerve; As was gravely preſſed home by Mr. *Blair* upon them in the Conference, and to which they could not, ſure they did not, give ſo much as a ſeeming ſatisfactory anſwer. Thirdly, they ſay in the Printed Paper, That a Deſire of Reconciliation was preſented, but peremptorily, the Electing, and ſending Commiſſioners to keep the day indicted by the Meeting of *Dundee*, was concluded. I know no oppoſition betwixt thoſe two, as I conceive any good ſenſe in the former, the one being the end, and the other a mean to it: Beſides, I know no deſire of Reconciliation preſented to them, except the Paper of the offer of a free Aſſembly, as the proper Remedy of our diſtractions. But in the *autograph*, it is *pretended*, not *preſented*; and ſo they moſt uncharitably aſſert, We pretended a Deſire of Reconciliation, but had concluded another thing: It is ſo wel known in the Countrey, whether it be we or they that uſe to act ſo; That I ſhal only need to ſpeik to the purpoſe? Our deſire of Peace was reall, the obſtruction of it was from them, and we had been very fooliſh, and cenſurable, if ever the Lord ſhould bleſſe us with another Aſſembly, for not walking anſwerable to our Truſt, in relation to this, if we had not deſigned the place thereof.

In the next room, They mention their Paper given in with the Propoſitions (wherein they ſay they have the conturrence of the Generality of the Godly of the Land) and did intreat for a Conference; which was denyed: the Commiſſioners proceed-

ing to assume the Power, and constitute themselves in a Generall Assembly: Lest any should think, that in assuming the Power, and constituting themselves in a Generall Assembly, they did some new and uncouth thing, as those who challenge them did the last year, in constituting themselves a Commission of the Kirk; Be it known to all men, they did no other thing, nor in no other way then all the Assemblies since the last Reformation have been in constant practice of: And how necessary it was, in this staggering time, not to change in the least, will be assented to, by every ingenuous man, nor know I any reason why they should complain: For those to whom the Paper was given, were not in a capacity to give an answer, till they were first constitute in an Assembly (yea none but an Assembly could satisfactorily answer their Demands, as is evident too, and will be acknowledged by the judicious Reader) Which was no sooner done, then they went effectually about it; but on the contrary, the Protesters would not so much as wait till then, but presently gave in their Protestation. We will not now speak of that other Paper, yet cannot pass that arrogant Title of the Generality of the Godly, which they assume to themselves, and their abettors. We will not mention of whom they learned this, and whom in many other things they too much resemble: But we shall refer the Reader to that most faithful and timeous Warning and Declaration of the late Assembly at *Dunaee*, and the third admonition and charge of the second part thereof.

Where they affirm it *their burden, and that they have no delight to be contesting with any who profess themselves to be maintainers of the Government of this Church.* It is wished their works were consonant to their words, and made them credible to all on lookers: Certainly, how ever they may please themselves, this is not the ordinary opinion that most men have of them.

Next, they speak of a party of insufficient, scandalous, and corrupt Ministers &c. *complying with the times, expressing their disaffection to the Work of Reformation, as they found opportunity, as in the time of* James Graham, *and the unlawfull engagement, who got greater advantage by the publick Actings for bringing in of Malignants to places of Trust: And who perceiving they were unable to endure tryal and purging, began the last year to*

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lift up their heads, and being encouraged by the Acts and Censures of Dundee, *have so strengthened themselves, as to carry on Publick Determinations to their own ends, from whom* (say they) *what can be expected, but to favour every evill course, to persecute such as seek the Lord in sincerity, suppresse the power of Godlinesse, and open the door of the Ministery to such as for insufficiency, scandals, or disaffection, have been justly deposed, in regard whereof, they think there is too great cause to make use of the Prophets words,* Jer. 23. 14, 15. There be many things here deserve animadversion.

I.

Although we deny not, but that in every Order there may be some out of Order; as *Judas* among the Apostles, and *Saul* among the Prophets, yet know we not of any such party as they speak of, nor did so much as any person of that kind soever appear among us, then according to the measure of his offence, he found the severity of Discipline. It would be seriously considered, whether or not by this Party, they mean the Body of the Ministery represented at *Dunder*, whom thus they would cast an *odium* upon; but what favour the Party that was truly such as they describe, found at that venerable Assembly, let their Acts and Declarations speak; which Declaration of theirs mentioneth another Party, that hath, (alas) too long lurked among us, and under specious pretexts brought their design to that pass we now see. These men should (according to the common rule) first have purged themselves, and taken this beam out of their own eye.

II.

It is true indeed, and I trust, the Kirk of this Nation hath no reason to repent, that she still hath some, who (during the prevailing of the Prelates) were carried down with the Tide of the times, even to give subscriptions according to the then way of entry, and being weighted therewith, do comfort themselves with *Paul*, That God will be mercifull to them, in that which they did ignorantly. But for those horrid Oaths they speak of, nothing is known but the common subscription: And if ought concern the Kirk to know more, it should neither have been so long concealed by those who appropriate to themselves the title of the godly, nor now revealed at such a time, and in such a way,

As for their ſubſcriptions, they were generally known; yet notwithſtanding thereof were the Subſcribers even at firſt invited to the Covenant, and ſome of them with the firſt appeared againſt the Service-Book, and many of them have not to this day fallen from their ſtedfaſtneſs; neither were all that have fallen of that number. But for further and full clearing of this, I offer theſe things. 1. Some of the prime of their number, are alſe, if not more groſſly guilty of the ill, then any of ours. 2. There are of our number ten for one of theirs, that in that hour and power of darkneſs, bare the heat and hard of the day. 3. Scarce twenty of them are yet of ſix years ſtanding in the Miniſtery, and but about five only of them were Miniſters, when the National Covenant was ſubſcribed. 4. And generally all the old Miniſters, and thoſe that were admitted before the Epiſcopal incroachment, are for the Aſſembly. 5. Laſtly, would we ſpeak of thoſe that ſuffered under the Prelats, the Aſſembly will be found to have three for it, where one is againſt it.

III.

As for any who by word or deed at any time appeared againſt the late Reformation, they ſtill found ſo little patrociny from thoſe who are now Aſſembly-Men, that I am ſure, if we ſhould ſerve the Proteſters with the like meaſure, for tranſgreſſions of the like nature, and perhaps greater, they would cry out, of cruelty and perſecution.

IV.

As for the Epithets they give that Party; I confeſſe, ill enough cannot be done to, let be ſpoke, of men who are truly ſuch as they deſcribe: But we deſiderate here both charity and prudence, at ſuch a time, and in ſuch a way, to fling filth upon the faces of their Brethren; and that (for ought yet ſeen or known) moſt unjuſtly.

V.

That the Publick Actings were for bringing in of the Malignant Party, to places of power and truſt, and bearing down ſuch as had been ſtraight in the Cauſe, ſtirring up the Ci-

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vill Magiſtrate againſt them; and ſubjecting the liberty of the Word in the mouth of Chriſts Ambaſſadors for reproof of ſin, to the immediat judiciall cognizance, reſtraint and cenſure of the Civil Magiſtrate, will appear a maſs of malicious reproaches, by ſhortly ſetting down the true ſtories related to: But I muſt firſt tell, that the odious term Malignant, doth not appertain to them, who having ſatisfied for their offences of that kind, according to the Order preſcribed by theſe mens own aſſent and advice keep themſelves free from new out-breakings of that abjured iniquity; And if we walk not according to this rule, many of them will be forced to hear, what for the preſent I purpoſe not to ſpeak. And next adde, that all the birds of their feather, were not ſo ſtraight in the Cauſe, as they would ſeem to inſinuat here: And on the other part, ſome whom they term Malignants here, have given unqueſtioned evidence of their affection to, and are ſtill ſuffering for that Cauſe.

Now, the ſtories related to, are theſe two; The one ſo well known, that we need no more but remember how, when, and upon what pinch of neceſſity, (which themſelves know how it came) the Commiſſion of the Kirk being enquired by the State, who might be employed for the neceſſary defence of the Countrey at ſuch a time; The Commiſſion of the Kirk gave that Anſwer, which their duty to GOD, their Mother Kirk, Native Countrey, and the Proteſtant Intereſt extorted from them, and which all Nations and Incorporations whatſoever, will, and do allow and practize in ſuch a caſe. But, that people may rightly judge of it, for it is ordinarily miſ-repreſented, we deſire them to get, and ponder the Commiſſions own Papers.

The other ſtory is ſhortly (in ſo far as it is moſt material) thus; It being repreſented by the Committee of Eſtates, to the Commiſſion of the Kirk, what hazard the Garriſon of *Sterline* was in by their Miniſters there preaching and otherways dealing, they withall ſignified how they behoved to take ſome courſe for ſecuring the ſame, the Commiſſion deſired their Lordſhips, that they would not meddle with the matter, till they had firſt dealt with them, and returned their report of the Iſſue, which being aſſented to, the Commiſſion wrote for them to St *Andrews*, where they met with them; and when by conference they would not receive ſatisfaction

tisfaction, began to entreat them first to give assurance, that they would not obstruct the Levies, but this they refused: Thereafter, that they would be pleased (for Peaces sake) to with-draw for a season from *Sterline*, and they would provide their Places, but this they also refused, although Mr. *Blair* then (apparently a-dying) did gravely obtest them, both for the one and the other; which being represented to the Committee of Estates, and they thereafter informed, how those Ministers continued in their former practice, they wrote for them once, and again, to come to *Perth*; But ere they came, (the most part of the Committee being removed to the North) they who remained, desired them to stay at *Perth* or *Dundee*, till the rest should return; against which they protested in very high terms, as encroaching upon the Ministery, &c. By the time the rest returned, the Parliament did sit, who desired the judgment of the Commission, whether or not the Committee of Estates had made any encroachment upon the Ministery and Government of this Kirk, by detaining these Ministers, and give their advice what course the Parliament should take in relation to them, for securing the Garrison of *Sterline*; the sum of the answer thereto was, the Brethren might lawfully protest, that nothing be done prejudiciall to the Liberties of the Kirk; but that they did not see that the Committee of Estates had encroached thereon, by that which they had done; and that they could give no advice to their Lordships, the securing of a Garrison being a thing not competent to them. After which, some of those Ministers friends entreated some of the Commission, to deal with the Parliament, to let their Brethren go home, under-taking for them, that they should not further offend; which the Brehren of the Commission did, engaging themselves to be answerable for their carriage; whereupon they were presently dismissed. This being the true story, let any judge of the truth of the former calumnies.

VI.

As for their purging humour, which time with these sad dispensations might have purged out of them, but belike it will never leave them; We grant indeed the Kirk should be carefull to purge out the old Leaven. All our question is, anent the manner

ner how: And I ſhall deſire them in the fear of God, to conſider whether their practiſe in this hath been in every thing squared to the Apoſtles Rules, 1 *Tim.* 5. 19. *Tit.* 3. 10. *Gal.* 6. 1. *Jud.* 22, 23. And whether or not they made it a politick ſcrew, to wind themſelves into all places of Power and Authority, Civill, and Eccleſiaſticall, and a mean of revenge, exercing it uncharitably and unſeaſonably.

VII.

As for any power in any to carry publick Determinations to any wrong ends, we can, and do bleſſe God, the contrary is known to be true, and all the Aſſemblies Determinations ſpeak the ſame Language to the whole world; yea, I hope, to their conſciences alſo, when the heat of their paſſions is a little allayed,

VIII.

For the following words, which are of the ſtamp with the former, I ſhall only adde 1. What meaſure every one that cometh not up them full length may expect of them, if their former actings had not ſufficiently cleared, their preſent expreſſions put out of all doubt. 2. It is not one of the characteriſticall properties of the Godly, to be ſo oft aſſuming that Title. 3. Such hainous accuſations muſt not be taken upon truſt, when nought is ſaid to make them appear. 4. I believe the Aſſembly knoweth of none received to the Miniſtery, but according to the Publick Order; and when ought ſhall appear to the contrary, will take ſuch courſe therewith as in Juſtice accordeth.

IX.

For their alluſion to the Prophets words, I ſhall deſire them ſeriouſly to read them again, and perpend if in conſcience, they be applicable to the points of preſent differences.

Next, they tell us, it ſhall be their purpoſe to maintain the Doctrine, Worſhip, Diſcipline, and Government of this Kirk, and particularly the Nationall Aſſemblies, ſo long as they are preſerved from corruption in the Conſtitution thereof: But many need better Arguments to perſwde them of this, then their bare Profeſſion, or practice this, year and the laſt; Of which we may well ſay,

ſay, what ever be the purpoſe of men, it is evidently the aim of the divel to ruine Generall Aſſemblies, and ſo to raze the walls of our *Jeruſalem*; And they would do well to conſider if, and how far they have been inſtrumentall to drive on that deſign.

But they would make ſome clearing here, by telling us that *All who are acquainted with the Principles and practices of our worthy Predeceſſors, and of the learned and godly non conformiſts in* England, *will eaſily ſee how far they are from their judgments and practices, who follow the wayes of ſeparation.* Belike they ſtill dwell beſide evill neighbours, but which is worſe, they are hardly believed, when men call to minde, and conſider how now of a long time, ſtill they took the patrociny of all that were ſuſpected to follow thoſe wayes. 2. What Progreſs ſome of their chief and eryed up men have made in thoſe wayes. 3. What affection they ſtill carry to them, and how familiarly they converſe with them, even although excommunicate. 4. But eſpecially how unavoidable ſeparation is upon their grounds: For if it be a matter of Conſcience for them to joyn with others in Civill Duties, that neceſſarily belong to the Incorporation, whereof both are members, ſure much more in Eccleſiaſtick. But a little time will further clear this.

As for an Argument drawn from the diſclaiming corrupt Aſſemblies at *Glaſgow*, or the following Aſſembly at *Edinburgh*, diſaffirming thoſe corrupt Aſſemblies, were a chief cauſe of the evills we then groaned under. How weak, I ſay, ſuch an argument will be for juſtifying their preſent practice, is palpable to any who will look either to the matter concluded in thoſe corrupt Meetings, or the manner of their procedure, or the particular reaſons whereon they were condemned, in all which there being nothing alike; I wonder why they are alledged, except perhaps, they know many of their Proſelytes will take upon truſt, whatſoever cometh from them, or ſeemeth to borrow countenance from *Glaſgow*.

They ſay, they have a clear warrant from Scripture, to plead and teſtifie againſt corruptions: It is, indeed, but withall they ſhould have better grounds then any we have yet heard of, or can conceive, before they trouble the Peace of a Kirk, and ſo peremptorily conclude, that a corruption, which they cannot prove

one;

one; yea what all, not only Reformed Churches, from the light of Scripture are perſwaded of, but even generally all people from the light of Nature, and upon the Principles, of ſelf preſervation, are convinced is a duty.

We paſſe for the preſent, to give any verdict, concerning ſome by-paſt Acts of theirs (which they mention) how good they were, or how true. What is ſaid being ſufficient to clear, that this their Proteſtation is alſe needleſs (to ſay no worſe) as the following grounds given for it are frivolous, which themſelves ſeem in part to aſſent to, while they ſay, they do it for all or ſome of the reaſons following, and ſo inſinuate, that ſome of them will not hold water, which (in my humble opinion) they might ſafely have affirmed of them all.

Their firſt reaſon is, that this *Meeting hath its dependence, power and authority for its indiction, from that of* St. Andrews, *and* Dundee. Is not that to beg the queſtion? and beſides, hath no weight, neither in reſpect of us who hold and have determined it a free, lawfull General Aſſembly, as indeed it was, and doth appear from the Vindication thereof, a pervous peece, not yet anſwered, nor eaſily anſwerable; Nor in reſpect of themſelves, and their principles, who in their Arguments againſt that Aſſembly, do determine, that Presbyteries may by mutual conſent, meet in a free, lawful Gen. Aſſembly; now the Commiſſions directed to this, do preſuppoſe and import the mutuall conſent of Presbyteries.

Their ſecond reaſon is, *That it is conſtitute after the ſame manner, and (for the moſt part) of the ſame members that the laſt Aſſembly was, to wit, of perſons that have carryed on a courſe of defection, and in reſpect hereof, are incapable of being Commiſſioners*; which again beggeth the Queſtion, and beſides that, it is anſwered in the fore-cited Vindication, includeth this falſhood, that they are (for the moſt part) the ſame Members conſtituent, whereas the Rolls compared will clear, that not the third man who was preſent the laſt year, are Members of this, neither did this Moderator precede in that challenged Commiſſion of the Kirk, nor was ſo much as preſent at it. But eſpecially this Argument our Remonſtrators have borrowed from the Remonſtrants of the *Netherlands*, their Proteſtation againſt the Councell of *Dort*; at which meeting, it was largely and learnedly refuted, as may be ſeen in the judgments of the Orthodox Divines thereupon.

The third reaſon is, becauſe *of the praelimitation of Elections, by*

the Acts made at Dundee *injoyning Synods and Presbyteries to proceed to censure all who oppose the Publick Resolutions, or should not acquiesce to the Acts made at* Dundee, *and so excludeth all not involved in the course of defection, from Elections, in pursuance whereof, there were sundry prælimitations made since, by severall Synods and Presbyteries.* For answer, I would enquire, with what conscience this Argument is proponed by them, who (for ought I know) are clear against the major, and cannot be ignorant of the vanity or nullity of the minor. Their major must be no Assembly, that is prælimited, can be free. But to pass the judicious considerations thereof in the learned Vindication, sure I am, themselves will never assent to any Assembly in this Kirk, without strange præ-limitations, yea and præ-conclusions too; as they did signifie at the Meeting and Conference in *May* last. And for the Minor, there were præ-limitations here, I pray you what? Such as may nullifie an Assembly? No such thing. Is a future Assembly prælimited, because a prior determined the qualification of its Members? Was the Parliament 1649. prælimited and unfree, because the Committee of Estates excluded therefrom, all that sate and voiced in the former? Or the Assembly of *Glasgow*, because the Tables appointed and laid down a way who should be elected thereto, and who not? Or all future Assemblies, because that of *Glasgow* excludeth from them all that shal not take the National Covenant? Whither doth their passion lead them? To plead the Episcopall cause? Besides, did not the Letter of the Commission in *May* last, require of Presbyteries, to choose faithfull and honest men? Which, what ever some have said, was no sinful prælimitation. Adde, although the Act of *Dundee* require Presbyteries and Synods, to proceed with the Censures of the Church against them, who after conference opposed the Publick Resolutions (not as they say, with a disjunctive, or who shall not acquiesce to the Acts made) yet hath no Presbytery nor Synod that I know, censured any upon that accompt, or excluded any from voicing in Elections; but rather all Presbyteries did require them thereto. Now, if they might elect, they might also by the same reason been elected; but themselves fore-seeing that, in few Presbyteries obtainable; where-ever they were, they refused and dissented, being probably themselves prælimited by the order and advice of their ring-leaders. Lastly, it is at best, needlesly added, that there were several limitations since in several Synods, I believe there wil be nothing else found but the same, *viz.* the assertion of the Constitution

ſtitution of the Aſſembly of *Dundee*, which we will not grant, and they cannot prove to be ſuch a præ-limitation, as is deſtructive of the freedom of an Aſſembly.

Their fourth reaſon is made up of many particulars, which we thus particularly reply to.

I. *There are many Presbyteries who refuſe to ſend Commiſſioners to this meeting as an Aſſembly.* But there be many unqueſtioned Aſſemblies have bin made up of fewer Members, as upon the inſpection of the Rols will appear. Neither is a Meeting that hath no determinate Quorum, evacuate or made null, becauſe a Minor part legally warned, cannot, or will not come thereto, as the perpetuall practice of Presbyteries, Synods, former Aſſemblies and Parliaments ſheweth. Nor is the number of the Abſents here ſo great; and although it were greater, it is not their ſimple abſence, but unjuſt excluſion, that rendreth the Meeting obnoxious to exception.

II. *They ſay, there are many Presbyteries that do concur in proteſting againſt this Aſſembly,* To which I reply, We have heard of diſſents, but not of any Proteſtation, except this, which they now have given; which if they mean here, as the Proteſtation is not *Presbyteriall*, ſo the reaſon will be found to have no more of reaſon in it, then if they had argued thus; We find our ſelves neceſſitated to proteſt againſt this Aſſ. becauſe we have proteſted againſt it. Or thus; This our Proteſtation is juſt and lawfull, becauſe we have proteſted.

III. Where *Presbyteries have ſent Commiſſioners, the Elections are generally controverted, there being Proteſtations made, at leaſt diſſents entered, againſt moſt of their Elections, upon good grounds.* But here (I think) a ſpeciall providence hath ruled, that there was no Proteſtation. In moſt Presbyteries there were no diſſents at all; and all that we heard of, were ſimply againſt the Elections, not againſt the perſons elected, beſides that they were not proſecute, nor brought in to be diſcuſſed. And a diſſent inferreth not by the Act of the Aſſembly a ſuſpending, let be a repealing of the Act of the Judicatory; Onely it maketh the Judges lyable to the cenſure of their Superiours, for what they have done; which if it be amiſſe, the diſſenter is not involved in their guilt or cenſure; but if not, he is cenſurable himſelf. And if it were otherwayes, we ſhould abſurdly be forced to confeſſe, that every Member of a Judicatory, hath a negative voice, which will open a door, whereby every faction may elide all General Aſſemblies for ever.

VI. *There*

IV. *There be wanting (Commissioners from Burghs) in respect of their present incapacity.* We need say no more to this, but themselves answer it, that they are in a present incapacity: and suppose they were not, yet have they not a negative voice. Besides they all were not absent.

V. *The generality of the godly in the Land go along with us (say they) and approve our protesting against this meeting.* A strange assertion, and of dangerous consequence. This Protestation was given in at the very beginning of the Assembly, ere ever it was constitute, and that upon the delay of taking in their first Paper; and is it probable they could gather all their consents in so short a time? Or had they them before? But that smelleth of a præmeditate Faction; Or go their resolutions along with whatsoever these Protesters do? But that is not suitable to them that are truly godly, to have their faith pinned to the sleeves of any, how high soever they hold their head. Or is it that they will allow none to be of the number of the godly, who go not along with them in every thing? This (I suspect) be the marrow of the matter: But who gave them that power to put out and put in into the Roll of the Godly, whom they please? And as we doubt of their authority so to do, even so also of their power; can they reach the heart, or are they quicker sighted then *Elias*, who saw not one of the seven thousand God had reserved to himself? Will they condemne all for ungodly, that are not of their way? How suiteth that with their professions elsewhere? I am sure we have here reason to dissent and appeal from such an uncharitable censure of them that have no power, to the righteous Tribunal of the Lord, to whom we stand. There may be somewhat more yet of dangerous consequence in it, in that they seem to subject the Publick Ministerial authority to the People, and amongst them, to such onely as are Saints, where if there be any mystery, they will do well to unfold it.

And now for the solemn words of the Protestation, the grounds and reasons thereof being boughed, we need say no more, but those principles from which they say they do it, viz. the zeal they owe to the glory of God, &c. were rightly weighed, they would inferre, and have produced the quite contrary conclusion: Which the Lord out of his tender mercy to this poor bleeding Church and Country, imprint upon their spirits for Christs sake. Amen.

FINIS.